

## Grammar Spotlight- Punctuating Direct Quotations

A direct quotation is when someone's exact words are copied, word for word, and set off with quotation marks.

**Correct:** My mother always says, "Look both ways before crossing the street."

**Incorrect:** My mother says that we should "look both ways when we cross the street."

**Punctuating:** Several steps need to be taken when using direct quotations:

**1. Use a comma before the quotation begins, or if the quotation is interrupted.**

*He said, "I like cheese".          "I'm not sure," he exclaimed, "but I'll try to find out!"*

**2.      a. Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks.**

*"I think you're wrong," Dan said.*

**b. Colons and semicolons ALWAYS go outside quotation marks.**

*Dan said, "I think you're wrong"; he was asking us to re-examine our information.*

**c. Question marks and exclamation marks go EITHER inside or outside the quotation mark depending on the situation. They go inside when the question or exclamation is part of what is quoted.**

*She asked, "Who did it?" or Did she say, "I'm quitting"?*

**d. When the sentence, as well as the quotation at the end of the sentence, needs a question mark (or an exclamation point), use only ONE question mark (or exclamation point), and place it inside the closing quotation marks.**

*Did she ask, "Is this fair?"*

**If you are questioning an exclamation, do it like this:**

*Is it true he yelled, "No!"?*

**3. Capitalize the first word in the quoted sentence; do not capitalize the second part of an interrupted sentence.**

*He yelled, "Send me the check, please!"          "Look at me," he instructed, "or you will miss it!"*

**Practice:** Add capitalization or punctuation as necessary.

1. I don't eat ducks he stated plainly.
2. If it rains said Allie the game will be postponed.
3. Dara asked when is the math homework due
4. Did he scream this isn't my name

## Other Punctuation mark oddities

1. The hyphen (AKA ENDASH) is used to connect two parts of a compound word that precede a noun

Sixty-two students; not-so-helpful man; long-lost brother; Mrs. Smith-Renolds

2. The dash is used to provide a longer, more dramatic pause in an interrupter.

Ex: My brother-who I hadn't seen for months- was staring me in the face!

Ex: The cat-trapped in the elevator shaft, hanging by his tail- was meowing loudly!

3. Ellipses are three periods in a row (...). They indicate a thought or idea that has been left out.

EX: I wanted the X-Box, but when I got to the store...let's just say it wasn't on sale.

Ex. Many people stared at the screen with amazement...it changed their lives.

Practice: Add any punctuation mark to the following sentences, including the ones above.

5. The lost cat the same one as I saw last week is outside my window!
6. The highly coveted prize has three parts the certificate the trophy and the cash award.
7. I looked for him in the store he wasn't there but I found Jacks books.
8. Suddenly as if hit by a bolt of lightning he jumped out of the chair it was amazing.
9. Twenty two groundhogs were living in my yard much to my sisters enjoyment.
10. I don't know what you want I yelled but you need to leave this womans house right now!